



Lewis Eugene Rowell

October 18, 1933 - May 15, 2025

Lewis Eugene Rowell died on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at age 91. He was born in Rochester, NY on October 18, 1933, the son of Lewis Ephraim Rowell, D.D.S., and Anne Sibbett Rowell, a teacher. He grew up in Fairport, a Rochester Suburb, and showed signs of musical talent at an early age. Music was to become the main theme of his economic, social, and intellectual life. He graduated from Fairport High School and also the Preparatory Department of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. His ten years at the school founded by George Eastman proved to be one of the two transformative decades of his life. He earned a bachelor degree in music in 1955 and a Ph.D. in 1958, both in the theory of music. His musical interests and abilities were wide-ranging: teaching was his vocation in higher education, research his lifelong priority, and opera his passion.

Early Professional life took him to the University of Oklahoma (Norman), Indiana University (Bloomington), and the University of Cincinnati (Ohio), where he served as Associate Dean of the College Conservatory of Music. Dissatisfied with administrative life, he returned to teaching and research at the University of Hawaii. His ten years in Honolulu proved to be the second and equally transformative decade of his career. Having a solid background in Latin, he proceeded to take courses in Greek, Sanskrit, and even South Indian Singing. India was to become the dominant theme of his research, and a sabbatical took him to India, where he met his second wife, Unni Gro Bjørlykke, a native of Norway. They were married on December 3, 1976, a

year to the day of their meeting at Bamaras Hindu University in Varanasi. The Honolulu years included solo organ recitals, solo harpsichord appearances with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, and singing roles in opera productions with the University Theater. Until 1972, Lew also served as organist and choirmaster in various Protestant churches wherever his academic career took him – first in Fairport and then in Oklohoma City, Columbus (Indiana), Bloomington, Cincinnati, and Honolulu. In 1979 he returned to Indiana University as Professor of Music Theory, Ethnomusicology, and India Studies until his retirement in 2005.

In his early years at IU, Rowell's principal publication activity was to coauthor a series of music theory textbooks that were widely adopted in the 60s and 70s. His 1983 book, *Thinking About Music*, was translated into Spanish and was published both in Spain and South America. But the book he will be remembered for is his *Music and Musical Thought in Early India*, which received the Otto Kinkeldey Award at the 1993 meeting of the American Musicological Society. Other awards include Indiana University's Distinguished Faculty Research Lectureship (1994), the Rochester Distinguished Scholar Medal (awarded at The University of Rochester's 1999 commencement), and the Deems Taylor Award from ASCAP for his article on "New Temporal Horizons and the Theory of Music" (2002).

Rowell was preceded in death by his parents, a son (James Walter Rowell), and his beloved wife of 46 years, Unni Gro Rowell. He is survived by his previous wife, Annette Johansson; by a daughter, Alison Lynch (Mark); Two step-daughters in Norway, Anne Bjørlykke and Nina Bjørlykke (Lars); seven grandchildren (Malia Rowell, Kristin de Lange, Erik de Lange, Abigail Cote, Jon Bjørlykke, Kevin Lynch, Ole Bjørlykke, and three great grandchildren (Hedvig de Lange, Cameron Cote, and Hennie de Lange). There will be no services, but a family gathering can be scheduled at the convenience of the overseas relatives.

Allen Funeral home is handling the arrangements and cremation rites have been accorded

Tribute Wall

JG

“ Lew was my neihbor for 6 years.During that that time we shared many memories.Also he shared his Music and I learned via his writings which he shared with me..We also had our happy hours together.and reviewed our roles as caregivers.WE also folloed the code TODAAT=TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIMEJerry Gonyo

Jerry Gonyo - May 18, 2025 at 08:42 AM